

Countdown of Top 10 Ideas...

For a Hassle-Free Classroom

10. Plan (over plan) a variety of tasks: at least three, better four or five, for a 95 minute class period. (ex.: “bellwork” writing, group research, circle practice)
9. Make sure there is a project to work on at all times which will show the student’s learning, and that each student is absolutely certain of what he’s supposed to be doing at that moment. (ex.: “We’re listing all the ways the film describes plants.”)
8. Enforce a minimum of three classroom rules, which any student could repeat at any-time. (ex. Arrive ready to work, one speaker at a time in whole group activities, 100% participation)
7. Pick your battles. (ex.: How many seconds until a kid is sweep-able?)
6. See the disruptive student OUTSIDE the classroom, for longer than a few moments. (ex. of good questions to ask: “Are you having any personal problems that keep you from being successful in our class?”, “How can I help you make it in our class?”)
5. Use a “quiet signal”, and practice it often. (ex.: Raised hands, chimes, countdown)
4. Call parents—with a PLAN. (ex.: A home-based checkup with a reward or punishment)
3. Give CHOICES to foster ownership and participation. (ex.: This poem or that poem, poster or oral report, any 10 problems on the page)
2. Use ACTIVE LEARNING as much as you possibly can; it engages students, and those who act out cannot easily disrupt it. Include at least one activity that REQUIRES that kids get up from desks and move around. (ex.: “Gallery Wall”)
1. Think of every student, even the most annoying, as someone’s most precious item in this world. (ex.: How would you want your own son/daughter to be disciplined if he had misbehaved in class?)